

THE BIRTH OF ATHENA TRITOGENEIA

I

To Homer Athena is simply the daughter of Zeus, Διὸς θυγάτηρ. He does not deal with Athena's birth and consequently does not tell us who her mother is. Hesiod's account of Athena's birth informs us that Zeus, following the advice of Gaia and Ouranos, swallowed Metis in order to prevent the prophesied birth of a son with greater might than his own. This son is never born, and the result of Zeus's act, which is reminiscent of the way in which his father and grandfather tried to eliminate offspring threatening their supremacy, is the birth of a daughter, Athena, from his own head¹. Hesiod, of course, does not explain how this happened, but the brief mention of Athena's birth from Zeus's head in conjunction with the parthenogenetic birth of Hephaistos from Hera (*Theogony* 924-929) clearly alludes to a strife between Zeus and Hera. Etiological and poetic elaborations and improvisations both on the theme of Athena's birth from the head of Zeus and of Zeus's provident forestalling of the birth of a son mightier than himself were left to later poets². Remarkably enough, the potential mother in these later accounts is not Metis but Thetis.

Another version of the story is to be found in the Chrysippus fr. 908 (*Fragmenta Hesiodica* 343)³. Since the two relevant passages from the *Theogony* and the Chrysippus fragment deserve a very close scrutiny for any elucidation of the origin of Athena Tritogeneia, I propose to discuss them as fully as I can when I venture beyond the necessary introduction to the problem of Athena in general.

To the Homeric heroes Athena was a virgin warrior goddess in full panoply, the daughter of Zeus and the sister of Ares, the war god par excellence. Her temples

1. Cf. *Theogony*, 886-900 and 924-929. It will be remembered in this connection that Ouranos hid his children Γαίης ἐν Κεοθμῶνι (*Theogony*, 158), while his father Kronos swallowed them (*Theogony*, 459). See also the excellent critical survey of the problem by H. Schwabl in *RE*, Suppl. IX, p. 1453-1454.

2. Aeschylus, *P.V.* 755 ff., 907 ff.; Pindar, *Isth.* 8.30 ff. and *Ol.* 35; Apollonius Rhodius, 4.790 ff.

3. *Fragmenta Hesiodica*, ed. Merkelbach, West, Oxford 1967, p. 171-172.

were prominently built on the tops of their citadels, and she was invoked by them as a divine comrade-in-arms. In the Homeric epics she has no connection with the sea and nothing whatever to do with the powers of generation and fertility. Such associations, tenuous even in later times, were acquired by the goddess as mere syncretistic appendages and, whether purely Hellenic or not, in terms of the goddess's pristine character they rank as secondary to her associations with women's work, various crafts, and matters strictly falling within the province of Hygieia⁴. The goddess with whom she has a close link is Nike (Victory), the sister of such unambiguously warlike personifications as Kratos and Bia (Power and Force)⁵. Her identification with foreign goddesses such as the Egyptian Nuith or an unknown Libyan divinity or the Italian Minerva⁶ form an insignificant facet of a process which must not blur our vision.

Her name 'Αθήνη and its variant adjectival forms 'Αθηναίη/'Αθηναῖα are considered by most scholars as pre-Hellenic⁷, and for the motif of her birth from the head of Zeus well-documented parallels in near-eastern myths have been duly pointed out⁸. Yet, caution must be exercised in order not to confuse the origin of the goddess by allowing syncretistic elements to obscure her fundamental character. In this paper I hope to show that the title Τριτογένεια rests on more than Hesiodic folk etymology, and reflects a fusion of functions which is more in keeping with the Hellenic components of Greek religion.

II

In what is in my opinion one of the best articles written on the myth of the birth of Athena, Norman O. Brown argues forcefully that the Hesiodic version which has Athena born from the head of Zeus after he has swallowed Metis is a product of Hesiod's mythopoetic genius⁹. Brown shows that the Myth of Metis is an

4. See Pausanias, 1.23.4. Cf. also O. Gruppe, *Griechische Mythologie und Religionsgeschichte* in *Handbuch der Klassischen Altertumswissenschaft* vol. 5 (ed. I. Müller), p. 1143.

5. Hesiod, *Theogony*, 383-388.

6. Cf. Plato, *Timaeus*, 213; Herodotus, 4.180.2.

7. Frisk, *GEW*, s.v.; Chantraine, *Dict. Étym.*, s.v.

8. Walter Burkert, *Griechische Religion der archaischen und klassischen Epoche*, Kohlhammer 1971, p. 224.

9. Norman O. Brown, *TAPA* 83 (1952) 130-143. One of the significant contributions of this article is the cogency and succinctness with which it shows that F. Solmsen, *Hesiod and Aeschylus*, Ithaca 1949, p. 67-68, Wilamowitz, *Athena*, *SB Berlin* (1921) 957-958, and Kruse, *RE* 15.1409-1410, misspent their critical acumen in trying to prove that lines 886-900 in *Theogony* should be treated as an interpolation. Brown also sides with A. B. Cook, who demonstrates beyond reasonable doubt that the motif of the birth of Athena by means of an ax-blow developed from the ritual of the *Bouphonia* in honor of Zeus Polieus (*Zeus*, II, 622-726).

integral part of the structure of the *Theogony* and that Metis, which he translates «creative ingenuity», «is a threat to Zeus and at the same time an indispensable aid to Zeus» (p. 133). He also succeeds in refuting the arguments of those who consider the archaic and classical form of the myth which involves the ax-blow motif earlier than its appearance in the art of the sixth century B.C. or in Pindar's Seventh Olympian. The individuality of the Hesiodic version, according to Brown, is marked chiefly not simply by its novelty, but more importantly by the fact that the Hesiodic Athena «has Metis in both its royal and its technical aspect» (p. 134).

When it comes to Athena's byname Τριτογένεια, Brown is inclined to lend some probability to the idea that the name may point to some old tradition which has the goddess born from the sea, but in general he considers the name «too obscure to be evidence at all»¹⁰.

I think that few etymologists can afford to be so circumspect. I also think that a careful reading of the Hesiodic passage which relates the birth of Athena shows that, much as in the cases of Aphrodite-Kythereia-Kypris and even of Pandora, and of Prometheus, Hesiod the folk etymologist has influenced Hesiod the myth-maker. In translation the relevant passage (*Theogony*, 886-900) reads as follows:

Zeus, king of the gods, took as his first wife Metis,
a mate wiser than all gods and mortal men.
But when she was about to bear gray-eyed Athena
then through the schemes of Gaia and starry Ouranos,
he deceived the mind of Metis with coaxing words
meant to cheat, and lodged her in his belly.
It was fated that Metis would bear keen-minded children,
first a gray-eyed daughter, Tritogeneia,
who in strength and wisdom would be her father's match,
and then a male child, high-mettled
and destined to rule over gods and men.
But Zeus lodged her in his belly before she did all this,
that she might advise him in matters good and bad.

The name Τριτογένεια suggests, at least superficially, 'she of the third γένος' or perhaps 'she who was born of, or for, three', and the like. That Hesiod could not have been unaware of the possibility that τριτο- in Τριτογένεια might be connected with the ordinal τρίτος is demonstrated by his deliberate contrast in line

10. *Ibid.*, p. 140, 143. For this view Brown cites G. W. Elderkin, *Studies in Early Athenian Cult*, *Classical Studies Presented to Edward Capps*, Princeton 1936, p. 106-110, and *Cults of the Erechtheion*, *Hesperia* 10 (1941) 114.

895 *πρώτην μὲν κούρη γλαυκώπιδα Τριτογένειαν*, and more so in the structure of his version. The son who would have *ὑπέρβιον ἦτορ* is never born, and Metis once swallowed never sees the light of day again. Athena is born as threefold hypostasis of her father and the never-born son as well as of Metis. In other words, she does not stand only for herself but also for her father by whom she is begotten as well as for Metis and for the son, whose birth would threaten Zeus's might. Hesiod launches from his own perception of the word a fanciful account which integrates into Athena's divine persona three elements which are necessary in his own scheme. Athena takes on her warlike features from Zeus and from the mighty son whom she supplants. She assimilates Metis to absorb royal «creative ingenuity». In this sense, she represents a harmonious integration and indeed a reconciliation of three distinct attributes, the very attributes which are to remain her salient characteristics for all time.

The question is: Did Hesiod create a myth which was entirely new, or did he, while employing folk etymology to his best advantage, give new life to some sort of tripartite fusion —one already mirrored in *Τριτογένεια*— which had taken place long before him in terms which he might have sensed but was in no position to recover? The answer to such a question must perforce offer no pretensions of certainty. But *Τριτογένεια* is already well attested in Homer (*Iliad*, 4.415, 8.39, 22.183; *Odyssey*, 3.78) and was not invented by Hesiod. Therefore, the question really is: Regardless of what Hesiod made of this word, what did the word stand for when it was formed?

In antiquity the first element of the compound *Τριτογένεια* was linked with rivers, springs, and lakes named *Τριτωνίς* and *Τριτώ*. Since the word *τριτώ* in Aeolic and Cretan meant 'head', and there was already the myth of Athena born from the head of Zeus, the meaning 'head-born' was also attached to *Τριτογένεια*. Some ancient scholars opted for the connection with the ordinal *τρίτος*¹¹. All the pertinent evidence was assembled and discussed by Theodor Bergk¹². But, I am afraid that, despite the many astute observations Bergk made, he put his erudition to less than rigorous use. He connects the names *Τριτογένεια*, *Τρίτων*, *Τριτωνίς*, *τριτώ*, *τριτοπάτορες*, *τριτοκούρη*, and even *Ἄτρυτώνη* (p. 318) with a mythology which he pushes well beyond the historical twilight into the darkness of Indo-European prehistory. He considers *Τρίτων* originally the name of a mythic river, and basing his argument chiefly on later literary sources which have Athena born *πὰρ κορυφῆν Τρίτωνος*¹³, he postulates the existence of a spring *Τριτώ* from which

11. See *LSJ*, s.v., for citations.

12. Theodor Bergk, Die Geburt der Athene, *Neue Jahrbücher für Philologie und Paedagogik* 81 (1860) 288-319.

13. Cf. the Chrysispos fragment 908 (= [Hes] fr. 343) in which lines 11-12 read *τὴν μὲν*

this river flows. He places the spring on the peak of the holy «Götterberg» and makes Athena into its guardian spirit¹⁴. The τριτοπάτορες are air and cloud spirits, and τριτοκούρη is so called because as a bride she must take a ritual bath in pure water¹⁵. Aside from the purely fantastic character of the topography of the spring Τριτώ and the stream Τρίτων on «the mountain of the gods», one may well wonder about the etymological foundation upon which Bergk's explanation rests, since an Indo-European root *trit-* meaning water is nowhere to be found. It is far more probable that Τρίτων, Τριτωνίς etc. contain a non-Indo-European root having something to do with water, but these words do not have to be linked with Τριτογένεια¹⁶. In addition to all this, it should be pointed out that the author of the Chrysippus fragment has Athena born πὰρ κορυφὴν Τρίτωνος ἐπ' ὄχθησιν ποταμοῦ, most likely because he connects Τρίτων with Τριτογένεια etymologically. Such folk-etymological evidence is instructive, but if taken seriously, leads into a vicious circle.

Kretschmer convincingly links Latin *tritavus* with Greek τριτοπάτωρ, which he takes to mean «Stammvater». He considers Τριτογένεια, much like Latin *pronepos*, a semantically reverse formation (Konträrbildung) in the temporal sense and one which, like τριτοκούρη, came to mean «die echtgeborene, die echtbürtige Tochter (des Zeus)»¹⁷ (parenthesis mine).

ἔτικτεν πατὴρ ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν τε / πὰρ κορυφὴν Τρίτωνος ἐπ' ὄχθησιν ποταμοῦ. In most sources, however, κορυφή is used a synonym for κάρα, κάρηνον, 'head', and Athena is born from the head of Zeus: Pindar, *Ol.* 7.36; Callimachus, *Hymn* 5 (Εἰς Λουτρὰ Παλλάδος) 135. Cf. also *Homeric Hymn* 28.5.

14. *Op. cit.* (above, note 12), p. 305.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 310.

16. Cf. Farnell, *The Cults of the Greek States*, Chicago 1971, I, 267.

17. Paul Kretschmer, *Mythische Namen: Tritogeneia und die Tritopatoren*, *Glotta* 10 (1920) 38-45 (quotation from p. 45). Kretschmer acknowledges his indebtedness for some of his ideas to Lippold, *Athen. Mitt.* XXXVI, 105 ff. Cf. also Kruse, *RE* VII A1, p. 244-245. In *Literaturbericht für die Jahre 1919 und 1920*, *Glotta* 12 (1923) 214, he dismisses Milan Budimir's suggestion that Τριτογένεια means 'Αθηναία, and that Τριτογενής in the phrase παίς μοι τριτογενής ἔτη also means 'Αθηναῖος. I must say that Budimir's latest effort to come to terms with Τριτογένεια by seeing some onomatopoeic «hydronymic» root *ter/ei/eu* in it leaves me quite puzzled: ΑΘΗΝΗ Η ΚΑΙ ΤΡΙΤΟΓΕΝΕΙΑ, *Živa Antika* 3 (1953) 4-20. The idea that Athena is called Τριτογένεια because she is the daughter of Zeus to whom the name Τρίτος is occasionally given is worth considering. This is not a new theory and Trencényi-Waldapfel revived it recently and drew attention to the fact that Zeus the «third god» (third ruler after Ouranos and Kronos —third brother in the company of Poseidon and Hades— umpire in the opposition of two hostile parties — the deity that witnesses and seals, as it were, a contract agreed by two contending parties) is honored by the third libation. I find no support for their conjecture that in a Greek house the maiden who performs the third libation must correspond to Athena of a mythological *aition* which assigns the same role to the goddess (*Ibid.*, p. 55-56). For the third libation to Ζεὺς

The Chryssippos fragment which Usener had ascribed to the Hesiodic *Katalogos*¹⁸ is ascribed by West to the pseudo-Hesiodic *Melampodia*, chiefly on the strength of fr. 275, which relates the quarrel between Zeus and Hera¹⁹. The most comprehensive treatment of this controversial fragment is the one by Sigrid Kauer, who thinks that the rhapsode who composed this piece made use of the river Triton in order to replace the obscure Hesiodic Τριτογένεια. Kauer considers both the Hesiodic passage and the Chryssippos fragment independent heirs of an older poetic and mythopoetic tradition. She also argues, more convincingly in this case, that Athena's birth from Zeus's head as opposed to her birth from a mountain peak can be reconciled as a doublet from a bygone age when mountains were imagined as giant gods²⁰. There is no reason for me to reiterate here the complexities of the Chryssippos fragment, since Kauer has dealt with them in a systematic way. It is clear from her analysis of the text that this fragment is truly rhapsodic. It is also my opinion that it draws not only on Hesiod but on other sources unknown to us. However, lines 11-12

... τὴν μὲν ἔτικτε πατὴρ ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν τε
 πᾶρ κορυφὴν Τρίτωνος ἐπ' ὄχθησιν ποταμοῖο

clearly constitute an attempt not so much to replace the obscure Τριτογένεια but to explain it etymologically. The Chryssippos fragment tells us that Μῆτις somehow sat inside Zeus: ἦστο Ἀθηναίης μήτηρ τέκταινα δικαίων (14). One should remember the relevant Hesiodic genealogies here. Pontos begets Nereus, and then we also have the following conjugal and filial patterns:

Νηρεὺς + Δωρὶς → Ἀμφιτρίτη
 Ποσειδῶν + Ἀμφιτρίτη → Τρίτων
 Ὠκεανὸς + Τηθύς → Μῆτις
 Ζεὺς + Θέμις → Δίκη

It seems to me that, in view of the aquatic connections of Ἀμφιτρίτη and Τρίτων, two names which our rhapsode must have linked with Τριτογένεια, and in view of the probable assumption that he was not unaware of the Hesiodic line αὐτὸς δ' ἐκ κεφαλῆς γλαυκῶπιδα γείνατ' Ἀθήνην (*Theogony* 924), the line πᾶρ

Σωτήρ, cf. τρίτον Διὸς Σωτήρος εὐκταῖαν λίβα (fr. 55 Nauck) and τὸν δὲ τρίτον κρατῆρα Διὸς Σωτήρος ἔλεγον (*Schol. Pind. Isth.* 6.7-8); Scholium 10a in Drachmann's edition.

18. Cf. Usener, Eine Hesiodische Dichtung, *Rheinisches Museum* 56 (1901) 174-186, especially 183. It is worth noting in passing that, according to the Scholiast on Apoll. Rh. 4.1340, Stesichoros was the first poet to say that Athena sprang, armed, from Zeus's head.

19. M. L. West, *Hesiod, Theogony*, Oxford, 1966, p. 401-403.

20. Sigrid Kauer, *Die Geburt der Athena*, Würzburg 1959, p. 24, 35.

κορυφήν Τρίτωνος ἐπ' ὄχθησιν ποταμοῖο is a clever συρραφή of genealogically and etymologically associated elements Τριτογένεια is thus explained but, whimsically, not mentioned directly. Metis is the one who Παλλάδ' Ἀθήνην / κύσατο (10-11), but the rhapsode, not ignorant of other versions which made Thetis the swallowed mother, makes his Metis τέκταινα δικαίων, thereby uniting —with tongue in cheek, to be sure— the two versions, since Δίκη is a daughter of Zeus and Themis. In other words, the rhapsode who composed the Chrysippos fragment produced a quilt into which he wove overtly and covertly almost all the main versions of Athena's birth. Where he was concerned, the listener could, by a small leap of the imagination, take κορυφή to stand for κεφαλή and Μητρίς τέκταινα δικαίων to be not so very different from Θέμις, the mother of Δίκη. All this, of course, does not explain the origin of Τριτογένεια, but it may shed some light on the perception of the Chrysippos fragment.

At this point, it should be made clear that it is not prudent to speak of the «Homeric» Athena as exemplifying this or that trait or function. The Iliadic Athena is different from the Odyssean one. M. W. M. Pope shows that, with the exception of the *Doloneia*, which he considers an interpolation, in the *Iliad* Athena is a warrior goddess, a counsellor and a patroness of craftsmanship²¹. Further, by means of a very incisive analysis of Athena's special relationship with Odysseus in the *Odyssey* and a comparison between this relationship and her behavior toward him and other heroes in the *Iliad*, he demonstrates that what links Athena with Odysseus in the *Odyssey* is their «common intelligence»²². Pope, quite correctly, considers Athena's birth from the head of Zeus without any reference to Metis as the oldest one and points out that, since in Homer the head is not the seat of the thinking process, this story is not to be taken as an allegory for birth from the mind of Zeus²³. It is not in the *Iliad* that Odysseus πολυμήχανος and πολύμητις (this adjective is applied only to Odysseus, with the exception of *Iliad*, 21.355) becomes Athena's favorite²⁴. What Pope's brilliant analysis makes patently obvious is that we are dealing with a development in epic, a development which has a definite chronology and which is the precursor of Hesiod's philosophical and theological schematization²⁵. In other words, the protective deity of the hero who is prototypi-

21. M. W. M. Pope, Athena's Development in Homeric Epic, *AJP* 81 (1960) p. 113-135, especially 119.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 113.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 113-115. Cf. also R. b. Onians, *The Origins of European Thought*, Cambridge 1951, p. 109-116, 121-127, 144-146.

24. For observations on these and other relevant adjectives cf. Pope, *op. cit.*, p. 132 ff.

25. Here I must record that, for all my admiration of Pope's article, I disagree with him on the following points: (a) his taking the Chrysippos fragment as a definitely Hesiodic version (p.

cally πολύμητις develops from a warrior goddess into a goddess born of Μητις and hence possessed of μητις. Hesiod is well aware of Athena's third province, craftsmanship²⁶, and hence not unlikely at all to have seen the name Τρτογένεια as reflecting a concept which did not entirely originate with him but which he fused into a more cohesive matrix²⁷.

III

Nilsson considers Athena a goddess of non-Hellenic origin, whose role as protectress of cities must be traced back to a development from the house- and snake-goddess of the Mycenaean kings. Her name, he thinks, is *probably* of pre-Greek origin. There is indeed much to be said for the arguments he marshals forth with his customary clarity and thoroughness, but as he himself admits, Athena «is a warlike goddess, while the Minoan house-goddess was not»²⁸. The question which must be asked here is: What are the compelling reasons for this well-argued theory, which has assumed almost canonical force? The evidence for the Minoan-Mycenaean house- and snake-goddess is undeniable. However, Athena may have been brought to the Greek ἀκροπόλεις by Hellenic invaders and may have acquired the snake and other local attributes in the amalgamation which must have taken place. Her helmet and her αἰγίς persisted in a way which make her inseparable from them many centuries after the end of the Minoan-Mycenaean civilization; indeed her warlike character cannot be eclipsed by the snake. Wilamowitz, who disagreed with Nilsson

113); (b) that Athena «was also a goddess of fertility and agriculture» (p. 114); (c) that the name Athena is certainly pre-Greek (note 5, p. 115).

26. Cf. *Theogony*, 573-577; *W.D.* 63-64.

27. Zeus μητίετα (six times in the *Iliad*, three times in the *Odyssey*) and μητιόεις (five times in Hesiod) already possesses μητις. This is his governing resourcefulness. The Μητις he swallows and assimilates may indeed be one which in addition to shrewdness (cf. ἀγκυλομήτης eight times in the *Iliad*) may have endowed him with the technical skill. This skill he imparted to a daughter who, already possessed of it (cf. *Od.* 6.232, *Il.* 15.411), proceeded to develop into a patroness of craftsmen. For an excellent discussion of Μητις/μητις vis-à-vis Athena cf. H. Jeanmaire, La naissance d'Athéna et la royauté magique de Zeus, *Revue Archéologique* 48 (1956) 12-39. Jeanmaire's insightful reflections are corroborated by his examination of the genealogical tree of Athenian royalty which includes such highly suggestive names as Metion, Metiadousa Eupalmos, Chalkon, Chalkope, and Daidalos. Certainly there is a reflection here of the importance of the craftsman's skill, but I think, little proof is to be found in this genealogy or elsewhere to support his assertion that Metis had «certains caractères d'une divinité oraculaire» (p. 13), or, for that matter, any significant connections with magic (p. 38).

28. *Minoan-Mycenaean Religion*, Lund 1968, p. 498-499. He develops his argument on p. 484-502 of this earlier work (cf. also his Die Anfänge der Göttin Athena, *Det Kong. Danske Videnskabernes Selskab. Hist. Filol. Medd.* 4, 1921, 7) and returns to them in *Geschichte der griech. Religion*, I, 418 and especially 433-444.

in many points, is convinced that both the name and the goddess are pre-Greek in origin, but argues that the Greeks Hellenized her and that «Sie [die Griechen] das fremde Gefäss mit ihrem Geiste füllten»²⁹.

There is no doubt that Athena, as we know her from Homer and Hesiod, was individuated by the Hellenes, most likely on Hellenic soil. However, since etymological evidence cannot suffice to prove Athena's Indo-European origin, I propose to turn to traditions other than Greek in search of counterparts which are much less likely than Athena to have originated from pre-Hellenic sources. It would be futile to search for a full-fledged Athena outside the confines of the Greek world, but instructive parallels should not be dismissed too readily. The later Roman Minerva does not interest us in this connection, but the Sabine city-goddess who was admitted to the company of Juno and Jupiter Optimus on the Capitoline to form the «Holy Trinity» of the Romans (the older and truly Roman triad is Jupiter-Mars-Quirinus) cannot be dismissed simply as an early Greek immigrant on Italian soil.

We also know of another intriguing Roman deity, Duellōna/Bellōna, a war goddess of great antiquity. Even though she may have been influenced from early times by Greek and Etruscan martial divinities, she is not a reflection of the Greek Ἐνυώ. Interestingly enough, much as Athena is closely associated with Nike, Bellōna is a goddess who can grant victory. Otherwise, the vow of Appius Claudius Caecus *Si hodie nobis victoriam duis, ast ego tibi templum voveo* as well as his calling upon her during a critical point of the battle as *Bellona victrix* make little sense (Livy, 10.19.17 and 10.19.21). Bellōna was not identified with Athena, because Minerva's early role as city goddess contributed to her eventually greater prominence and identification with Athena³⁰. The important thing is that we have not one but two war goddesses in Italy, and that there is little likelihood that these goddesses were borrowed from the Greeks. We should also bear in mind that Caesar informs us that the Gauls, in addition to Apollo, Mars, and Jupiter, also honored Minerva (*Bellum Gall.* 6.17). This Gallic «Minerva» does not have to be the same as the Roman Minerva, but she must have been a war goddess.

There is no Nordic Athena, but there is a fusion of classes and functions

29. *Sitzungsberichte der Akad. der Wiss.*, Berlin 1921, p. 950-965. His view is not unreasonable, but this article is more of an exercise in rhetoric than a scholarly contribution. It will be remembered that it is in this article that Wilamowitz condemned *Theogony*, 886-900, as an interpolation on the most untenable grounds. For a brief but eloquent defense of this passage, in addition to Brown's article (above, note 19), see Michael C. Stokes, *Hesiodic and Milesian Cosmogonies - I*, *Phronesis* 7 (1962) 36-37.

30. For Bellōna see g. Dumézil, *Archaic Roman Religion*, Chicago 1970, 390-392 and *RE* II, 254-257. In the roman general's formula of *devotio* Bellōna is mentioned fifth after Janus, Jupiter, Mars Pater, and Quirinus (Livy, 8.9.6).

evident in the clash and reconciliation of the Aesir triad (Odin, Eyr, Thor) with the triad of the Vanir (Freyr, Njordr, Freyja). It will be remembered that in the battle of the three Roman Horatii against the three Alban Curatii (in the first book of Livy) we have another clash of triads, and that what emerges from this battle over the Sabine women is a union of the three original Roman Tribes (Titienses, Ramnenses, Luceres). Of course, the number three is such a universal characteristic of polytheistic governing divinities that one has to beware of reading into every triadic divine «council» more than is judicious. Thus, the Baltic divine triad, Patolo, Perkuno, and Potrimpo, beyond the number three, offers no instructive analogues³¹.

There seems to be proof in Greek literature that Athena by being transfunctional is *ipso facto* trifunctional. As Udo Strutynski shows, in Aeschylus' *Eumenides* Athena represents the first function by deriving her juridical and patriarchally-oriented veto from Zeus, the second function by being throughout the play the unmistakable war-goddess, and the third function by transforming the Furies into the Eumenides, goddesses presiding over fertility of the earth and generation of man and beast³². In representing all three functions Athena emerges in this play as an embodiment of all three classes and functions, and indeed in such a way that none of the aspects of her tripartite persona are compromised or blurred. She is truly trinitarian and supreme, and Aeschylus did not invent any of her functions; he simply defined the third one in terms of settled and civilized life within the polis. As Strutynski observes, «The social charter of Aeschylus is headed and embraced by Athena, representing her country and her people, who under the transfunctional aspect of Panathenaia stands as the supreme symbol of the unity of Athens»³³.

As is well known, the Dumézilian model of the tripartite Indo-European class and function system is rather scantily reflected in Greek epic and myth. Dumézil himself recognized this fact and attributed it to the «Greek miracle» and to the powerful influence of the indigenous civilization on the energetic but uncultivated invaders³⁴. Yet, scholars have not been unsuccessful in finding the model mirrored in unmistakably clear contours in some cases, or elusively evanescent in waters

31. But this may be due to lack of evidence and to the fact that the study of the religion of the Balts has just begun to receive its long-overdue attention: Cf. Jaan Puhvel, Indo-European Structure of the Baltic Pantheon, *Myth in Indo-European Antiquity*, ed. Gerald J. Larson; coeditors C. Scott Littleton and Jaan Puhvel, University of California Press 1970, p. 210-228.

32. Udo Strutynski, Three Functions of Indo-European Tradition in *Eumenides*, *Myth and Law Among the Indo-Europeans*, ed. Jaan Puhvel, University of California Press 1970, p. 210-228.

33. *Ibid.*, p. 228. Strutynski adduces parallels for such transfunctionality from the myths relating to the Indic Sarasvatī and the Iranian Aradvī Sure Anāhitā (p. 221).

34. G. Dumézil, *L'idéologie tripartite des Indo-européens*, Brussels 1958, p. 31.

muddled by the march of time in other cases. One convincing and neatly delineated parallel was discovered by Yoshida, who identified on the shield of Achilles three principal themes corresponding with the three components of the Indo-European social model (the juridical scene, the city at war, and the blessings of agricultural life)³⁵.

Then there is the Judgment of Paris in which Dumézil sees Hera (the spouse of the divine sovereign), Athena (the war goddess), and Aphrodite (goddess of sexual union and propagation of men and animals) as an unequivocal reflection of the Indo-European tripartite system³⁶. The *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* may, upon closer scrutiny, yield more parallels, but great caution must be exercised not to make the criteria so flexible that we lose sight of the existence of certain universals. After all, almost every society has rulers/priests, warriors, and people who work for them³⁷.

The reason for examining real or putative Greek parallels for the Indo-European tripartite model is clear. The Greek tradition, when compared with the Roman, Germanic, and Indic traditions, offers evidence of the kind skeptics do not consider conclusive. Yet, it is obvious that although the evidence from Greece may not be as clear, it is by no means negligible. Therefore, the suggestion that in Athena Tritogeneia we are dealing with a reflection of the reconciliation of the three principal functions cannot be dismissed on the grounds that the Hellenes had lost every vestige of their Indo-European social concept while on the way from the Indo-European *Urwald* to the sunny shores of the Mediterranean.

The name Τριτογένεια did not originate with Hesiod, and the myth which has Zeus swallow Metis and then give birth to Athena from his head certainly antedates him. What does not antedate him is the version of the story as he gives it to us in *Theogony* 886-900. The word Τριτογένεια seems to have acted as a catalyst, a mythopoetic springboard. The new goddess is definitely a goddess of war (*Theogony*, 924-925):

αὐτὸς δ' ἐκ κεφαλῆς γλαυκώπιδα γείνατ' Ἀθήνην
δεινὴν ἐγρεκύδοιμον ἀγέστρατον ἀτρυτώνην

However, she is a complex figure. She carries in her μῆτις, which, as Brown

35. A. Yoshida, La structure de L'illustration du Bouclier d'Achille, *RBPH* 42 (1964) 5-15.

36. G. Dumézil, Les trois fonctions dans quelques traditions grecques, *Homage à Lucien Feuvre*, Paris, II, 25-32.

37. I must record here that upon reading and rereading C. Scott Littleton's Some Possible Indo-European Themes in the *Iliad*, in *Myth and Law Among the Indo-Europeans*, p. 229-246, I have come to the conclusion that some of his arguments about parallels in the *Iliad*, however tempting, must await confirmation from a comprehensive study of Homer along the lines he has pioneered in this article.

showed, is both royal (through her father) and technical (through her «mother»). Zeus who swallows Metis both assimilates and appropriates her in a preemptive way. He keeps her prisoner inside him, so that she cannot mate with anyone else. By this act he breaks the chain of the primordial mother conspiring with a rebellious son and secures the supremacy and perpetuation of his rule. The new goddess is powerful and potentially dangerous, but she is father-born and, therefore, she does not owe allegiance to a mother. In essence Zeus engineers a coup which ends the chain of matriarchal sovereignty. But his is only one aspect of the myth. As I have already said, whatever the origin of Τριτογένεια, Hesiod clearly sees in her a goddess who takes the place of three personae and, by extension, of three functions. Since the new goddess embodies the warlike function as well as the ruling and technical functions, can it be that what we have here is a reflex, as it were, of an older, clearer tripartite fusion? Athena is not only the goddess of war. She is also the goddess of royal ingenuity, and of technical ingenuity which extends to the level of domestic craftsmanship. From *Theogony* 573-577 we learn that Athena bedecked the progenitor of all women. But in *Works and Days* 63-64 we are told that Athena was chosen by Zeus to teach Pandora «works» and weaving: ἔργα διδασκῆσαι, πολυδαίδαλον ἴστων ὑφαίνειν. Here then she operates much like the patroness of craftsmen, the Athena Ἐργάνη of later times.

Dumézil has postulated the three Indo-European classes and functions of priests, warriors, and breeder-farmers. If we remember that the king, divine or human, was also the high priest, and that when shepherds settle down to form civilized communities they depend less on cattle-breeding and more on farming and urban craftsmanship, we may have in Athena Tritogeneia the embodiment of a fusion of the functions which represent all three classes. Such a fusion may have taken place well before the Indo-Europeans came to Greece, but it may have undergone some transformation to fit the new realities. The invading Hellenes were pastoral and fiercely patriarchal, but they became the ruling element in a country whose religion, at least, seems to have been more matriarchal and whose life depended more on agriculture and the craftsman's skill, and less on flocks of sheep and goats. The old Παλλὰς Ἀθήνη, the maiden goddess who was not destined to nurse a baby, and who was the daughter of Zeus, represented a conciliatory compromise who could be worshipped by men and women³⁸, by conqueror and conquered. Her name Τριτογένεια was obscure, and Hesiod understood it in his own terms. Yet, he may not have missed the mark by much when he incorporated from tradition what fit into his own conception of the divine pantheon and at the

38. Cf. the late but not insignificant line ἄρσην μὲν καὶ θῆλυς ἔφυς, πολεματόκε, μήτι in *Orphic Hymn* 32.10.

same time corresponded with popular sentiment and practice. Hesiod's Athena Tritogeneia as an imaginative modification of an older *concordia ordinum* could still be worshipped by the rulers, the warriors, and the craftsmen of the Mycenaean palaces³⁹. The fact that the snake of the snake-goddess was associated with her never changed her basic character⁴⁰. It only shows that the goddess of the rulers took on an attribute from a local goddess and did so with the grace and diplomatic shrewdness dictated by political expedience as well. There is indeed nothing to force upon us the view that the snake-goddess of the Mycenaean palaces developed into the helmeted Athena of the Hellenes. She survived, transfigured, into several Hellenized and semi-Hellenized forms as the mother goddess who is known to us by several names. Athena found the snake-goddess in the Mycenaean palaces much as she found Erechtheus in Athens. Indeed the lines (*Odyssey*, 7.78-81)

ὥς ἄρα φωνήσασ' ἀπέβη γλαυπῶπις Ἀθήνη
 πόντον ἐπ' ἀτρύγετον, λίπε δὲ Σχερίην ἐρατεινὴν
 ἴκετο δ' ἐς Μαραθῶνα καὶ εὐρυάγυιαν Ἀθήνην,
 δύνε δ' Ἐρεχθῆος πυκινὸν δόμον...

may preserve an old story which is not irrelevant to the argument put forth here. Mary, the Mother of Christ, came to Greece from Israel and was identified with the ubiquitous mother goddess of the land. In a well-known ninth-century Byzantine hymn we find her hailed for a victory she has granted in the following remarkable way:

Τῇ ὑπερμάχῳ στρατηγῷ τὰ νικητήρια,
 ὡς λυτρωθεῖσα τῶν δεινῶν, εὐχαριστήρια
 ἀναγράφω σοι ἡ πόλις σου, Θεοτόκε.
 Ἄλλ' ὡς ἔχουσα τὸ κράτος ἀπροσμάχητον
 ἐκ παντοίων με κινδύνων ἐλευθέρωσον,
 ἵνα κράζω σοι· Χαῖρε, νύμφη ἀνύμφευτε.

39. Walter Pötscher's views that Athena is «Die Göttin des *Hauses*, seiner *Bewohner* und des Stückchen Landes auf dem diese leben», that she possesses «Enge *assoziative* Beziehung zur ἄρουρα» and that she represents «Das ganze γένος, die lebendigen und die toten Mitglieder des Geschlechtes» seem to me to complicate the issue by oversimplifying it. See Walter Pötschner, *Gymnasium* 70 (1960) 527-544, especially 540.

40. At his point I should like to state that the role of the snake in connection with Athena's origin may have been exaggerated. We hear of snake worshippers among the Baltic peoples (cf. Jaan Puhvel in *Myth in Indo-European Antiquity*, p. 76), and Thor's deadly opponent, Midgardsorm, the serpent coiled round the earth, is not an οἰκουρὸς ὄφις by any stretch of the imagination, but it is very Nordic and not Mediterranean at all. For Midgardsorm see E. O. G. Turville-Petre, *Myth and Religion of the North*, Greenwood Press 1964, p. 75.

Mary then, who at the end of the Μέγας Παρακλητικός Κανών is called χρυσοπλοκάωτατος πύργος καὶ δωδεκάτειχος πόλις, is hailed as ὑπέρμαχος στρατηγός, as giver of νίκη, as πολιοῦχος possessed of κράτος ἀπροσμάχητον and as unwed maiden. The hymn is far more appropriate to Athena than to Mary, the mother of the Prince of Peace. But this should not mislead us into thinking that Mary owes her origin to Athena, much as the snake of the Minoan-Mycenaean snake-goddess should not beguile us into reversing Athena's origins.

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